

# The BEAR Program - A tool for building the local economy and community

-Presentation Notes-

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**'You've got to be  
hungry – for ideas, to  
make things happen  
and to see your vision  
made into reality.'**

**(Anita Roddick)**

# C.A.R.E STRATEGY

**C** reation

**A** ttraction

**R** etention

**E** xpansion

**BUSINESS  
EXPANSION and  
RETENTION  
(B.E.A.R.)  
Program**

# Origins ...

- ❑ New Jersey Bell Telephone Company in 1986
- ❑ Town of Napoleon

**Now a national  
strategy in USA,  
Canada, Australia,  
New Zealand &  
South Africa**

# Business Retention and Expansion International

[www.brei.org](http://www.brei.org)

# Australian Developments

- Coorow (WA) is first community to implement in 1998
- Jobs East implements program in East Melbourne involving 6 local govt areas in 1998/99
- NSW AND QLD implement state funded programs
- MAV adopts B.E.A.R. as community planning tool in 2008

# What is it?

Simply gigantic community dialogue  
and learning conversation with  
its local business about -

- What helps?
- What hinders?
- What ideas to enhance the local business environment?

# Critical elements ...

- Community initiative
- Local taskforce leadership
- Use of community volunteers and a structured interview questionnaire to stimulate learning conversations
- Immediate responses to red flag issues and requests for help
- Development of long term business and community work plan

# The Business Retention and Expansion Program allows the possible discovery of:

- Picture of local business health
- Elements of business success
- Local business needs and concerns
- Perceptions by local businesses about what is preventing expansion
- Identification of businesses considering relocation outside the community and why

- Perceptions about government actions that help and hinder local businesses
- Opportunities for match making local businesses
- Current and future labour market needs
- Good ideas people have for improving the local economy and the business environment.

**The ideas and issues raised  
provide the basis for:**

- ❑ actions/referral to address immediate business requests and concerns**
- ❑ the design and implementation of community economic development strategies and actions**

# FLOW DIAGRAM OF BR+E PROGRAM

Assessment of the level of community interest and support



Formation of local leadership team and selection of Project Coordinator



Agreement on scope of Program



Promotion



Identification of businesses to be visited



Recruitment and training of volunteers



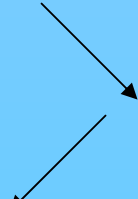
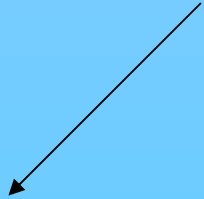
Visitation to businesses

Review of other information relating to local business life issues



Analysis of data, identification of issues and opportunities of issues and opportunities  
↓  
formulation of action plans

Immediate follow up to requests for help



Community feedback



Implementation



Review

**10 reasons why I am  
passionate about  
B.E.A.R. as a  
community and  
economic development  
tool?**

# Reason 1.

**B.E.A.R. encapsulates  
the 4 critical starting  
points in community  
development**

# Belief 1.

Meaningful and lasting community change always originates from within, and local residents in that community are the best experts on how to activate that change.

# Belief 2.

**Building and nourishing relationships is at the core of building healthy and inclusive communities.**

# Belief 3.

Community residents act responsibly when they care, and support what they create.

# Belief 4.

Creating positive change always begins simply with conversation. It is the way that people have always thought together and initiated action .

**'The simplest and most powerful investment any member of a community or an organisation may make in terms of community building is to begin talking with other people as though the answers mattered'.**

**(William Greider)**

# REASON 2.

**BR & E Visitation Program  
is a wonderful  
demonstration of  
community and economic  
development**

# *COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

'...Is that sustained and united effort by the whole community to utilise their social, human, physical and financial resources to enhance their local economic and employment opportunities and their quality of life.'

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'...It is about local people taking responsibility for their economic future. It involves processes of identifying and harnessing community resources and opportunities to stimulate sustainable economic activity.'

**'...It is about changing perceptions and choices regarding development options, community resources, markets, rules and decision making capacity.'**

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**'...It is based on the simple premise that each community has within itself or within its grasp, considerable capacity and opportunities to influence it's social, economic and employment future.'**

# Reason 3.

**B.E.A.R. builds the  
mindset of a  
connected, healthy and  
strong community**

# Seven Pillars Of A Healthy Community

Practices ongoing dialogue  
Generates leadership  
Shapes its future  
Embraces diversity  
Knows itself  
Connects people and resources  
Creates a sense of community

(Healthy Cities and Communities Coalition, USA)

# Strong Communities

- have strong leaders
- have strong networks with other communities
- can build on their existing assets and resources
- have a 'can-do' community spirit and are optimistic about the future
- can grasp the opportunities that come their way
- have a sense of 'belonging' to the community among it's members
- embrace change and take responsibility

(Stronger Families, Stronger Communities at Department of Family and Community Services)

# SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

- ❑ Build on the strengths of local individuals, associations and institutions;
- ❑ Focus on specific actions and measurable results to improve community life;
- ❑ Promote participation by people of all races, genders, cultures and age groups;
- ❑ Ensure local decision making and ownership;
- ❑ Draw upon the resources of the whole community;
- ❑ Bridge all sectors to develop healthy children, families and community; and
- ❑ Share experience and knowledge to promote continuous community learning.

(ACCORDING TO PRIME MINISTERS YOUTH PATHWAYS ACTION PLAN  
TASKFORCE 2001)

**'A strong community is one constituted by people that understand its social, economic and environmental assets and are working towards sustainability ...**

**To do these things, members of a strong community need to be engaged, involved, feel capable of work through issues and be supported through external partnerships'**

**(Department of Victorian Communities)**

'Most communities can often be compared to an Australian rules football game where 30,000 people who need the exercise, turn up to watch 36 players who don't.'

(Peter Kenyon)



# Reason 4.

**B.E.A.R. reflects the  
actions of an  
enterprising community**

' The real voyage of  
discovery consists  
not in seeking new  
landscapes, but in  
having new eyes'

(Marcel Proust)

**'An enterprising community is one that is informed, engaged and future orientated. It converts information and learning into knowledge and capitalises on the strengths of the area, turning these into competitive advantages and employment opportunities. It requires leadership, empowerment, creativity and innovation.'**

**(City of Onkaparinga, South Australia)**

# DESIRED ONKAPARINGA OUTCOMES

- an informed and engaged community
- a place that generates leaders for the future
- translation of ideas into local enterprise attraction
- attraction of new and enterprising industries
- meaningful local employment opportunities
- increased access to diverse education and training opportunities

# Reason 5.

**B.E.A.R. focuses on the  
most critical element of  
local economic  
development - existing  
businesses**

# IMPORTANCE OF THE EXISTING BUSINESS BASE:

- ❑ creates between 60-80% of new jobs
- ❑ provides most of the investment for new community economic initiatives / infrastructure
- ❑ often generates ideas about possible new businesses
- ❑ often acts as an attraction for outside businesses to relocate or establish within the community

**'70% of all investment in a region is driven by the business indigenous to the region.**

**Therefore, a region's number one lever for encouraging growth is its existing people and businesses.'**

*(McKinsey and Co, Lead Local, Compete Global, 1994)*

**B.E.A.R. creates a  
number of potential  
benefits for local  
businesses**

- ❑ knowledge that their community and local government values their presence, and is interested in their needs, concerns and ideas
- ❑ opportunity to air complaints about any aspect of the local environment
- ❑ referral to appropriate sources of information, advice and support programs
- ❑ input into future local economic development decision making and action plans
- ❑ opportunity for local business match making and networking
- ❑ opportunity to raise the profile of the local business community.

# Reason 6.

**B.E.A.R. focuses on  
linking conversation with  
planning and action**

# The B.E.A.R. Program ...

- ❑ plans for something to happen
- ❑ responds to the issues and needs identified in the survey
- ❑ implements projects as local initiatives
- ❑ provides a strategic framework for action, both immediate and long term.

**'I believe in action. In this world, it is not what you know that matters. Rather, its what you do with what you know that counts. Information is valuable – action is invaluable'.**

**(James Belasco, *Teaching the Elephant to Dance*)**

**'Sooner or later, all the  
thinking and planning  
has to degenerate into  
work'.**

**(Peter Drucker)**

# COOROW BR&E OUTCOMES

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## ACTION

- |                                               |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Community Meeting                          | Held Feb 1999                                                              |
| 2) Coordinating Group                         | Formed March 1999                                                          |
| 3) Telecentre                                 | Opening April 2000                                                         |
| 4) Business Enterprise Centre                 | No Action                                                                  |
| 5) Business Prospect -<br>Steel / Engineering | On Site Works Start Prior<br>March 2000                                    |
| 6) Townscaping                                | Town Beautification Plan,<br>Implemented 2000- 2004                        |
| 7) Land Availability                          | CCLI Obtained<br>Westrail Land for<br>Light industrial /<br>Commercial Use |
| 8) Employee Housing                           | CCLI Running Barracks -<br>Singles Accommodation                           |
| 9) Business Consumer Survey                   | No Action                                                                  |

# Reason 7.

**B.E.A.R. builds local  
leadership and community  
entrepreneurialism and  
capacity**

**'Given the task of rejuvenating a region and the choice of \$50 million, or \$2 million and 20 committed local leaders, we would choose the smaller amount of money and the committed leaders'**

**(McKinsey and Company (1994) Lead Local Compete Global: Unlocking the Growth of Australia's Regions)**

'Nowadays towns are really not so different from businesses, they need to keep recreating themselves. Not so many years ago country towns were subject to general trends. They would all do well or all do badly. The picture is now very uneven. The successful towns are likely to be driven by people who are passionate and creative, who see an opportunity and go for it. You need communities with a bit of get up and go spirit. Some have it, some don't.'

(Roy Powell, Centre for Agricultural and Regional Economics)

# Community Entrepreneurship

- ❑ A community's ability to act collectively to take advantage of opportunities
- ❑ presence of a community environment that allows economic and social entrepreneurs to flourish

# In the B.E.A.R. Program ...

- ❑ the community plans the program, manages and implements the program
- ❑ community volunteers visit the businesses
- ❑ linkages and networks are built
- ❑ the wider community's awareness of, and involvement in community and economic development is strengthened

# Coorow raises bar on future

**NATASHA GRANATH**

The Coorow Hotel is halfway to being one of the best old pubs in the bush.

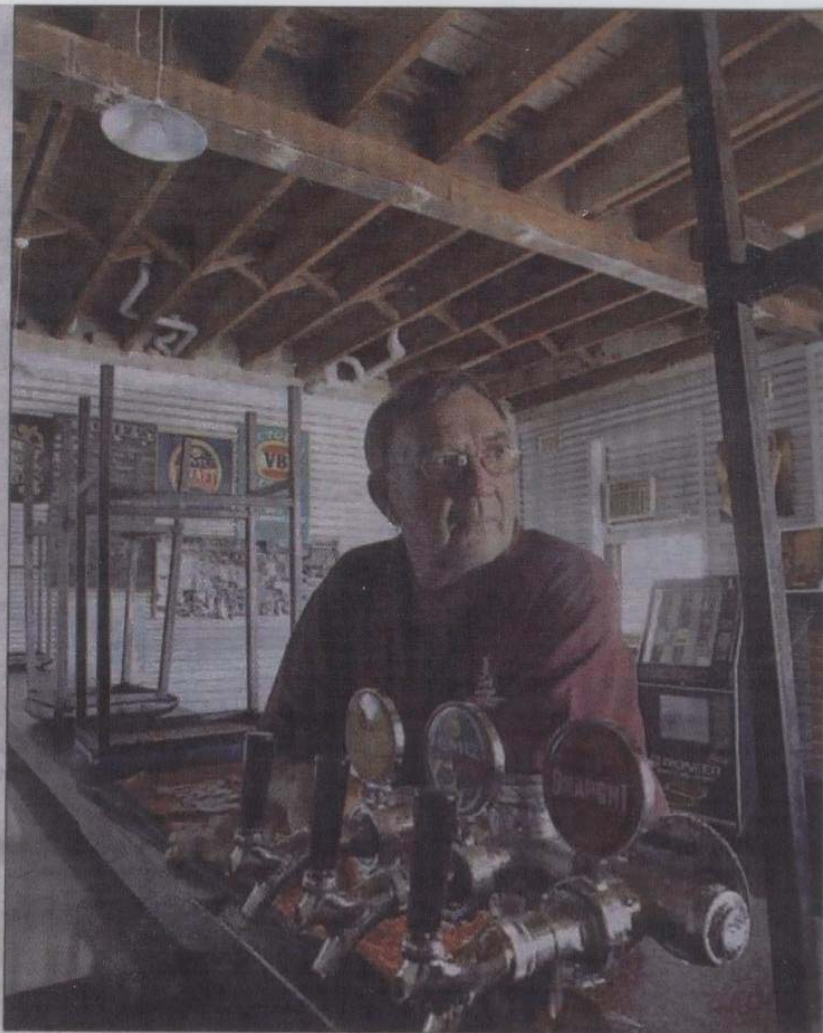
On the cusp of the Wheatbelt and Mid West regions, the hotel — 270km north of Perth — has been the social hub of the 220-strong town since it opened in 1930. But declining numbers in the Shire of Coorow and a series of owners saw the Art Deco-style pub fall into disrepair.

Now, with the help of a scheme started by Coorow Community Land Inc., the hotel has undergone more than \$100,000 of renovations.

The Coorow Community Farm — a 105ha piece of land that uses volunteer labour to make money for town projects — allowed the group to get a self-supporting loan to buy the hotel. The group then raised \$56,000, matched by the Department of Environment and Heritage under the Historic Hotels Program.

Chairman John Stacy said \$112,000 had covered the first of three stages of the upgrade, creating modern separate bathrooms and an upstairs manager's residence.

The project has been a milestone in the group's plan to rebuild its



**John Stacy aims to raise an extra \$200,000 to renovate the Coorow Hotel bar.**

community from the ground up.

The community group is appealing to sponsors to cover the next stage of improvements worth \$200,000 — doing up the kitchen, dining room and bar, which at some point was fitted out with corrugated iron.

“We have also just had the Coorow Muster here, which brought in about 700 people on a Saturday night and

raised \$12,000 for the King-Jeffery appeal,” he said. “We had two young men killed in a road crash here in December and the appeal will bring the money raised up to \$100,000 — their families will get \$50,000 each.”

The next projects will be to see whether the group can buy a service station and set up a community bank with neighbouring town Leeman.

The West Australian 5/5/04

# Reason 8.

B.E.A.R. simply demonstrates that *'the wisdom of the community exceeds the knowledge of the experts'*

(Harold Flaming)

# Reason 9.

**B.E.A.R. is invaluable in  
terms of community  
planing**

# Community Planning

*'A process where the people (i.e. the community) arrive at group vision, priorities and actions to achieve positive change that will enhance the physical, social and economic well being of the community. It is a dynamic, interactive and participatory process intended to make the quality of life better for all members of the community'.*

'Devolved community  
planning is the future  
of local government'

(Tony Blair, British Prime Minister)

# Reason 10 and finally...

**B.E.A.R. enables communities to simply reinforce the golden rule of local business development -**  
*"business stays and expands where it is well treated and appreciated"*

# Discussion question:

*Share what you see as the strengths and challenges of introducing such a program into your community.*